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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 203788

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM SANTIAGO DTG 262137Z

AUG 75 RPTD TO YOU:

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5829

ARA/LA/MRSD O'GRADY - PASS PARA 5 ONLY TO AFL-CIO AND AIFLD/W

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, ELAB, PINT

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT PINOCHET RECEIVES LABOR LEADERS

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 5051; (B) SANTIAGO 5186; (C) SANTIAGO 5358;

(D) SANTIAGO 5734

1. SUMMARY: IN UNUSUAL GESTURE, PRESIDENT PINOCHET BACKED BY FOUR MINISTERS RECEIVED GROUP OF 20 LABOR LEADERS IN LENGTHY PRIVATE SESSION EVENING AUGUST 22. INVITEES INCLUDED SIX OR SEVEN NATIONAL LEADERS. THEY REPORTEDLY WERE GIVEN FULL OPPORTUNITY TO AIR GRIEVANCES, WHICH RANGED FROM GENERAL SUSPENSION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS TO MINOR LOCAL PROBLEMS. AIFLD ISSUE (REF C) WAS RAISED AND LABOR MINISTER STATED THAT DECISION TO SUSPEND SEMINARS HAD BEEN COMMUNICATED TO AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVES ON VISIT TO SANTIAGO. FOUR LEADERS WHO REPORTED SESSION TO EMBASSY
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WERE PLEASED WITH RESPECTFUL, PATIENT ATTITUDE OF GOC LEADERS IN SESSION AND THAT THEY HAD HAD OPPORTUNITY TO AIR COMPLAINTS AT TOP LEVEL. EVENT COULD BE ONLY MERE IMAGE BUILDING, OR SIGNIFY DESIRE OF PRESIDENT TO ASSUME GREATER ROLE IN SOCIAL/LABOR

SECTOR. END SUMMARY.

2. AS REPORTED BY PRESS AND PRIVATELY BY SEVERAL OF PARTICIPANTS, PRESIDENT PINOCHET AND RESPONSIBLE MINISTERS RECEIVED ABOUT 20 LABOR LEADERS IN FIVE-HOUR SESSION AUGUST 22. FOUR WHO OFFERED ACCOUNT OF SESSION TO EMBASSY ARE AMONG SIX-SEVEN NATIONAL LEADERS WHO ATTENDED. THEY SAY THAT EVERY ONE WAS ALLOWED FULL OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT GRIEVANCES, BUT THAT GOC MADE NO COMMITMENTS TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS.

3. NATIONAL LEADERS' COMPLAINTS CENTERED ON SUSPENSION OF UNION ELECTIONS, RECENT ARRESTS OF COPPER LEADERS (REFS A, B, AND C), GOC SUSPENSION OF AIFLD SEMINARS (REF D), HIGH LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT, NEED FOR ADDITIONAL GENERAL WAGE ADJUSTMENT, AND GENERAL SUSPENSION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS (ASSEMBLY, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND STRIKES).

4. MINISTERS DIAZ (LABOR) AND BENEVIDES (INTERIOR) FIELDDED MOST OF QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS. PINOCHET REMAINED SILENT "BUT ATTENTIVE." HE CLOSED SESSION WITH SHORT REMARKS, INCLUDING PROMISE THAT GOC WOULD SERIOUSLY STUDY EACH GRIEVANCE AND "REPORT BACK TO THE LABOR LEADERS THROUGH THE PROPER MINISTER."

5. REPORTEDLY WHEN ISSUE OF SUSPENSION AIFLD SEMINARS SURFACED LABOR MINISTER DIAZ REAFFIRMED THAT SEMINARS WERE IN FACT SUSPENDED AND SAID THIS HAD BEEN REPORTED "PERSONALLY TO TWO AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVES ON THEIR RECENT VISIT TO SANTIAGO." (COMMENT: DIAZ DID NOT IDENTIFY AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVES. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE THAT HE MIGHT HAVE REFERRED TO RCIA INTERNATIONAL REP. O'KEEFE AND FIET REP. FOSTER, WHO WE UNDERSTAND MET WITH DIAZ DURING THEIR RECENT VISIT. END COMMENT) DIAZ REPORTEDLY THEN ADDED TO CONFUSION ON THIS ISSUE BY STATING: " WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING AGAINST THE CHILEAN AIFLD PROGRAM."

6. LEADERS WHO REPORTED SESSION TO US WERE GENERALLY PLEASED THAT PRESIDENT HAD PERSONALLY GRANTED AUDIENCE AND HAD PATIENTLY HEARD THEM OUT. ALL HAVE RECENTLY VOICED DOUBTS THAT TOP LEVEL CONFIDENTIAL

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OF GOC WAS AWARE OF LABOR'S PLIGHT; THIS MEETING HAS AT LEAST REMOVED THEIR DOUBTS. ALL WERE ENCOURAGED THAT NO EFFORT WAS MADE TO STIFLE THEIR PRESENTATIONS, AND THAT THERE WAS AMBIENCE OF RESPECT DURING SESSION.

7. COMMENT: COMING IN WAKE OF RECENT ARRESTS OF LABOR LEADERS AND TIGHTENING UP ON UNION MEETINGS AND SEMINARS, THIS SESSION AS REPORTED IS ENCOURAGING. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER EVENT IS MERE GOC WINDOW DRESSING STAGED TO IMPROVE IMAGE. EVEN IF THIS IS THE CASE WE EXPECT THAT SOME ADJUSTMENT OF LABOR PROBLEMS MIGHT RESULT, SINCE GOC WOULD APPARENTLY LIKE TO HAVE LABOR PARTICIPATE AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE IN CELEBRATION OF JUNTA'S SECOND ANNIVERSARY, SEPTEMBER 11.

8. PINOCHET HAS BEEN INCREASING HIS CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE,
AND MEETING PRESUMABLY WAS INTENDED TO SHOW THAT EXECUTIVE
CARES FOR WHAT PEOPLE AND THEIR LEADERS THINK. MEETING FOLLOWS
GOVERNMENT DECISION NOT TO FORCE THROUGH REVISIONS OF LABOR
CODE WITHOUT AT LEAST GIVING APPEARANCE OF STUDYING LABOR-
MANAGEMENT COMMENTS.

9. WE NOTE THAT AS PART OF SOCIAL SECTOR, LABOR IS RESPONSIBILITY
OF JUNTA MEMBER/AIR FORCE CINC/GENERAL LEIGH. PINOCHET IS
EXTENDING HIS PRESIDENTIAL PRESENCE IN THIS AREA ALSO.
POPPER UNQUOTE
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